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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5842
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1748
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000849

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PARIS AND LONDON FOR AFRICA WATCHERS, CA/ACS, RABAT FOR
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [LY](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: CHAD: GODBOLD UPDATE 10/30

REF: A. NDJAMENA 832
[1](#)B. NDJAMENA 825

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Seized Amciti Cash Steve Godbold has been moved to a location deeper in the heart of the Tibesti, but his colleagues in N'Djamena are still confident that he is in good health and being well treated. The Red Cross has been contacted and is ready to facilitate his release, but they cautioned that they would not be involved in negotiations. Press releases characterizing Godbold as working with a U.S. Government-funded project are misleading, and a corrected press release should be issued. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Charge, RSO, PAO and Consular Officer met with colleagues of seized American Cash Steve Godbold Carl Hodges and Mark Ortman and two Ndjamenan-based International Red Cross (ICRC) staff members on October 30 to discuss the latest developments in the case. Charge briefed attendees on her meeting with the Chadian Secretary of State for the interior (reftel A) and informed them that she had also discussed the case on October 26 with the President's Civil Cabinet Director, Mahamat Hissein. Hissein informed Charge that the Presidential Advisor for International Relations, Youssouf Saleh Abbas (himself a former MDJT rebel) would be tasked with handling the matter on his return from Libreville. Hissein described the situation as very concerning. He volunteered that he thought the rebels were doing it for money. He expressed exasperation that - despite years of GOC negotiations with the MDJT - the MDJT was never satisfied.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Godbold's colleagues were concerned that press reports link Steve to the U.S. Government. They stressed that Steve was assisting the Chadian Association for the Development of the Tibesti in his capacity as a friend of individuals in the association. He was not a subcontractor of the U.S. government and was not working for the project. Press reports have characterized Godbold as either a "sub-contractor" or "working with the project" which gives an erroneous impression of his relationship with the U.S. Government. They were also concerned that the name of their U.S.-based organization (TEAM) was being used in press releases. They explained that they preferred to be referred to use the Committee for the Coordination of Missionary Activities of the Evangelical Church in Chad (French acronym EET/COCOAM) which is the body under whose auspices they operate in Chad. CDA agreed that a revised press release should be sent out clarifying Godbold's relationship with the USG (comment: this will be cleared through PA/Washington and should be available there as well. End comment).

¶3. (SBU) Hodges informed CDA that his organization had decided to send out a crisis management expert in a week if the situation was not yet resolved. Hodges was grateful to learn that expert hostage negotiation teams were available from the USG if needed, but he did not think that this was required for the time being. Godbold's wife and children will return to the United States next week.

¶4. (SBU) Ortman informed the group that senior Tubu member Hader Adjì (please protect) had been in contact with MDJT leader Choa Dazi (see reftel B for CDA discussion with Adjì). The possibility of releasing Godbold to Libya or Niger was discussed. Adjì reportedly told Dazi that release in Libya was a non-starter. Release in Niger was a possibility, but release in Chad would be optimal. Red Cross participants noted that they do not have a delegation in Libya and therefore would not be able to facilitate his release there. Niger would be a possibility. Ideally the rebels would agree to release Godbold in a location in Chad. The Red Cross would need logistics support and Government of Chad assurance that they were authorized to enter into MDJT territory, but they would be available to facilitate a hand-over of Godbold from the MDJT. They could not, however, enter into negotiations with the MDJT.

¶5. (SBU) Godbold has not spoken by satellite phone with anyone since early last week and he is not believed to have access to a phone. Ortman and Hodges stated that he had been moved to a more distant location. He was now in the town of Moudouran - 40 kilometers from Zoumri and 100 kilometers from Bardai. Despite not having had contact with him, they were confident that he was in good health and was being well treated.

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¶6. (SBU) Hodges and Ortman continue to believe that quiet negotiations and pressure by the Tubu community will be the most effective means of gaining Godbold's release.

¶7. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
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